seeks to convert all non-tariff barriers such as, Quantitative Restrictions (QRS), into tariffs. Imports are to be regulated only through tariffs. However, countries are free to apply tariffs within the bound level. In the case of India tariffs for primary agricultural products, processed agricultural products and edible oils have been found at 100%, 150% and 300% respectively except for a few items which had been found at lower levels in the earlier negotiations. Bound level of duties of some of these items where the earlier bound level of duties was considered inadequate, were got raised under Article XXVIII negotiations by giving concession in some other items, to provide the necessary protection to the farmers and the domestic industry. None of the WTO Agreements has put any restrictions on the marketing of domestic agricultural products.

Consequent to a ruling of the Dispute Settlement Body of the WTO, which held that India was no longer justified in maintaining QRs on balance of payment grounds, India is in the process of phasing out QRs on imports which it was maintaining earlier under the Balance of Payments considerations and the balance of QRs are to be removed by 1.4.2001. However, the import of agricultural items is beign suitably regulated by imposing appropriate tariffs within the bound tariffs so as to provide adequate protection to the farmers and domestic industry.

Various items exported from Maharashtra

†2962. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of agro-products, mineral products, forestry products, industrial products, textile products, and other products exported from Maharashtra during the last five years; year-wise and item-wise; and

(b) the steps beign taken to encourage the export from Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The Central Government maintains the export data for the country as a whole and not State-wise.

(b) Central Government evolves plans and formulates its export policy to promote export of various items and products from all State/Union Territories of India including Maharashtra. Under Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme three projects namely-Strengthening of Urban Panvel State Highway, Setting up of Regional Trade Centre, Pune & Computerisation of Santa Cruz EPZ have been sanctioned for Maharashtra at a total cost of Rs. 6.2675 crores.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Some of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to boost exports of agro products from the country as a whole including Maharashtra include:

1. Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old cashew plantations, area expansion, improving productivity and training of farmers.
2. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control and modernization of processing units.
3. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.
4. Providing assistance in development of data base and dissemination of market information.
5. Providing assistance for setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, eliminating contamination & ensuring freedom from fungi and bacteria.
6. Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of floricultural items and select fresh fruits and vegetables.
7. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables.
8. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for eliminating pest incubation in the product especially the mangoes for gaining access to overseas market.

Allowing foreign companies to import and export

†2963. PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have put conditions for allowing foreign companies to import and export;

(b) if so, what are these conditions; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and what will be its effect on Indian economy?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.